

economic opportunity in Ireland and the outreach and impact you're having beyond the borders of your nation, is also a part of the peace process, because you have shown the benefits of an open, competitive, peaceful society.

And nobody wants to go back to the Troubles. There are a few hills we still have to climb, and we'll figure out how to do that, and I hope that our trip here is of some help toward that end. But as long as the people here, as free citizens of this great democracy, and as long as their allies and friends in the North increasingly follow the same path of creating opportunities that bring people together instead of arguments that drive people apart, then the political systems will follow the people.

So it is very important that all of you recognize that whatever you do, whether you're in politics or not, if you are contributing to the present vitality of this great nation, you are helping to make the peace hold. And for that, I am very grateful.

Let me just say in closing, when I started my involvement with the Irish peace process, to put it charitably, half the political experts in my country thought I had lost my mind. [Laughter] In some of the all-night sessions I had making phone calls back and forth over here through the whole night, after about the

third time I did that, to put it charitably, I thought I had lost my mind. [Laughter] But I can tell you that every effort has been an honor. I believe America has in some tiny way repaid this nation and its people for the massive gifts of your people you have given to us over so many years, going back to our beginnings. I hope that is true.

For me, one of the things I will most cherish about the 8 years the American people were good enough to let me serve as President is that I had a chance to put America on the side of peace and dignity and equality and opportunity for all the people in both communities in Northern Ireland, and for a reconciliation between the North and the Republic. I don't know how I happen to have such good fortune, and even though it gave me a few more gray hairs, I'm still grateful that I did.

Good luck. Stay with it, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Arrol Suite at the Guinness Storehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Celia Larkin, who accompanied Prime Minister Ahern; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Bertie Ahern.

Statement on the Ethiopia-Eritrea Final Peace Agreement December 12, 2000

I congratulate the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea for the final peace agreement signed today in Algiers. My relief and happiness on this occasion mirrors the sadness I felt when I witnessed

two allies and friends embroiled in a tragic conflict. I look forward to resuming our strong cooperation with Ethiopia and Eritrea across the spectrum of bilateral issues.

Remarks to the Community in Dundalk, Ireland December 12, 2000

Thank you very much. First let me thank the *Taoiseach*, Bertie Ahern, for his leadership and his friendship and his kind and generous words tonight.

Mr. O'Hanrahan, thank you so much for the gift and your words. Joan McGuinness—it's not

easy for someone who makes a living in private business to stand up and give a speech before a crowd this large. If you look all the way back there, there's a vast crowd. You can't see it in the dark, but all the way back here there are just as many people. So I think we ought